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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:

a capaciflective sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a predetermined distance about ~~said~~ a vehicle port;

a lock for securing ~~said~~ the port; and

a control unit in communication with said capaciflective sensor, said control unit for controlling the actuation of said lock.

2. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim ~~2~~1 including an electronic key device for sending a key code to said control unit wherein said control unit is programmed to actuate ~~actuates~~ said lock when said key code matches said security code.

3. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 2 wherein said electronic key device sends said key code when requested by said control unit.

4. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 3 wherein said control unit requests said key code when said object crosses said predetermined distance.

5. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 1 wherein said object is at least a portion of a person.

6. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim 1 including a vehicle subsystem in communication with said control unit, said vehicle subsystem for responding to the presence of an object crossing said predetermined distance.

7. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim 1 including a latch for controlling opening and closing of said port.

8. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim 7 wherein said latch includes a sensor in communication with said control unit, said sensor for detecting ~~that detects~~ movement of said latch.

9. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 8 wherein said sensor is an infrared sensor.

10. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:

a vehicle port;

a capacitive sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a predetermined distance about said port; and

a control unit in communication with said capacitive sensor, said control unit for comparing a signal from said capacitive sensor with a predetermined threshold.

11. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim 10 including a lock controlled by said control unit, said lock for securing said port.

12. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim 11 including an electronic key device sending a key code to said control unit wherein said control unit ~~actuates~~ is programmed to actuate said lock when said key code matches said security code.

13. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 12 wherein said electronic key device sends said key code when requested by said control unit.

14. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 13 wherein said control unit requests said key code when said object crosses said predetermined distance.

15. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 10 wherein said object is at least a portion of a person.

16. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 15 wherein said predetermined threshold relates to the presence of said at least portion of a person within said predetermined distance.

17. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim 10 including a vehicle subsystem in communication with said control unit, said subsystem for responding to the presence of an object crossing said predetermined distance.

18. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 10 including a latch controlling opening and closing of said port.

19. (Currently Amended) The vehicle port control system of Claim ~~7~~18 wherein said latch includes a sensor in communication with said control unit, said sensor for detecting ~~that detects~~ movement of said latch.

20. (Currently Amended) A method of port control comprising the steps of:

establishing a voltage on a first surface;

establishing about the same voltage on a second surface spaced from the first surface;

establishing a lower voltage on a third surface spaced from the second surface, thereby propagating an electric field from the first surface, around the second surface, and to the third surface;

sensing changes in the electric field caused by the presence of an ~~objected~~ object in the electric field;

generating an electric signal based on the changes in the electric field;

comparing the electric signal to a predetermined threshold; and

controlling a port based on the comparison.

21. (New) The vehicle port control system of Claim 1 wherein said capaciflective sensor comprises a first surface, a second surface and a third surface, said first surface having a first voltage about the same as a second voltage on said second surface, said third surface having a third voltage lower than said first surface.

22. (New) The vehicle part control system of Claim 21 wherein said second surface is spaced between said first surface and said third surface.

23. (New) The vehicle port control system of Claim 1 wherein said capaciflective sensor is oriented to direct the electric field away from said lock.